DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 475 974 PS 031 242

TITLE	Building a World Fit for Children: The United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children, 8-10 May, 2002.
INSTITUTION	United Nations Children's Fund, New York, NY.
PUB DATE	2003-04-00
NOTE	31p.
AVAILABLE FROM	United Nations Children's Fund, 3 UN Plaza, H-9F, New York, NY 10017. Tel: 212-326-7513; Fax: 212-303-7985; e-mail: pubdoc@unicef.org; Web site: http://www.unicef.org. For full text: http://www.unicef.org/pubsgen/build-wffc/build-wffc-en.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS
DESCRIPTORS	Access to Education; Access to Health Care; *Change Strategies; *Child Health; *Childhood Needs; *Children; Developed Nations; Developing Nations; Objectives; Sexual Abuse; Violence; *Well Being
IDENTIFIERS	*United Nations

ABSTRACT

The United Nations Special Session on Children in May, 2002, was a landmark for children and human development—the first Special Session of the General Assembly devoted exclusively to children and the first to include them as official delegates. Participants came together to assess the progress made toward achieving the goals of the 1990 World Summit for Children, to set far-reaching goals for the 21st century, and to devise a powerful strategy for achieving these global commitments. This report describes the Special Session for Children and summarizes the subsequent plan of action for improving the lives of children around the world. Following an introduction, the first section of the report describes the mission of the Special Session: to devise a plan of action that would bridge the gap between the promises and the achievements of the 1990 World Summit. The second section of the report describes the truly global nature of the Special Session, which brought together 69 world leaders; 190 delegations; more than 1,700 representatives from Non Governmental Organizations; 5 Nobel Peace Prize Laureates; an array of leaders from business, religions, the arts, academia, and civil society; and more than 600 children. The third section of the report then describes The Children's Forum, a "children only" exchange held 3 days prior to the Special Session. The fourth section summarizes the "meeting of the generations" at activities and roundtables comprising the Special Session. The fifth section highlights the more than 120 supporting events—meetings, panel discussions, symposia—held in support of the Special Session. The sixth section then summarizes the resulting "World Fit For Children," a plan of action for promoting healthy lives, providing quality basic education, combating HIV/AIDS, and protecting children from abuse, exploitation, and violence. (HTH)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

BUILDING A WORLD FIT FOR CHILDREN

ED 475 974

The United Nations
General Assembly
Special Session on Children
8-10 May 2002

PS 031242

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
patricia lone
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
2A

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

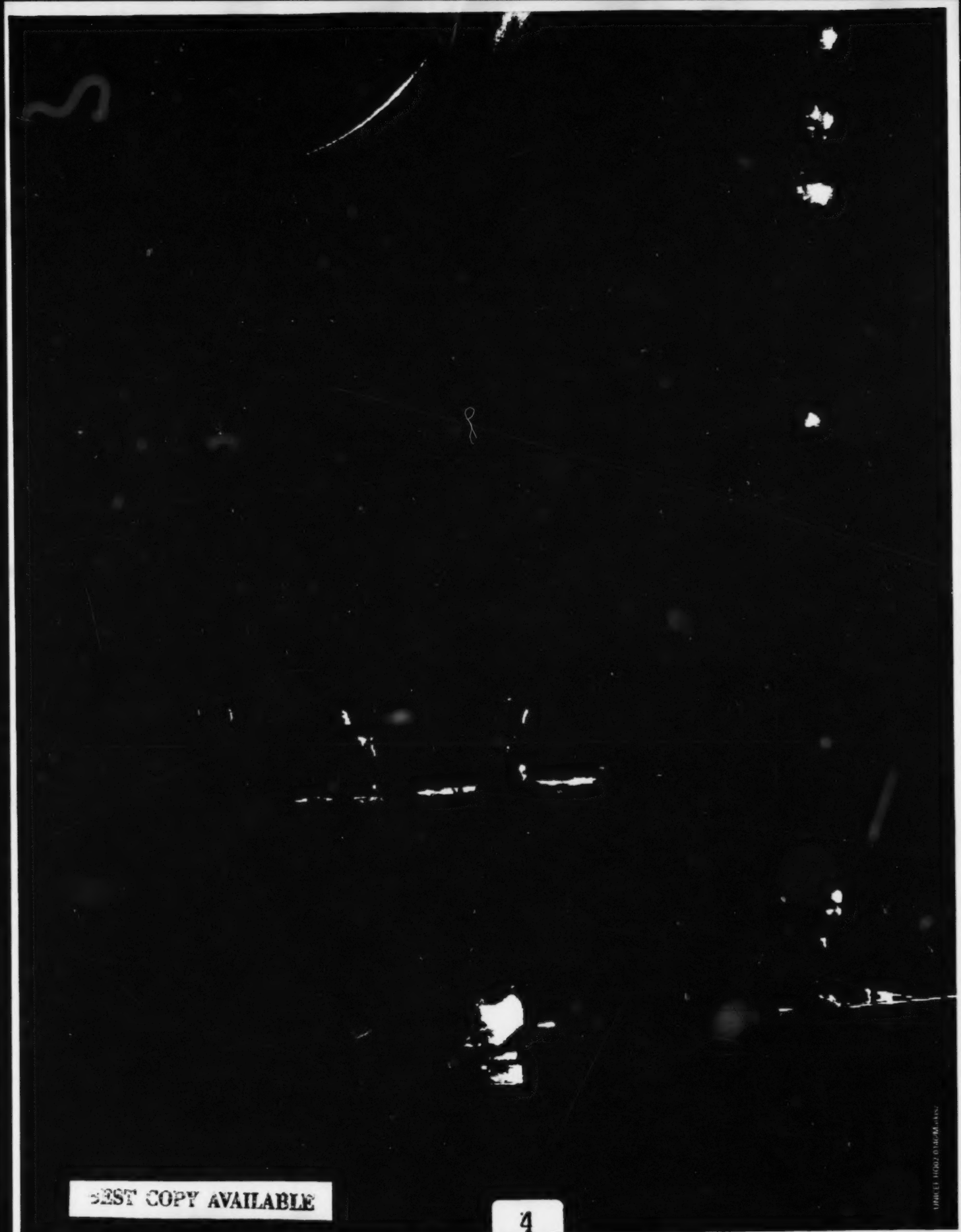
For every child
Health, Education, Equality, Protection
ADVANCE HUMANITY

unicef

"This is not just a Special Session on children. It is a gathering about the future of humanity."

Kofi A. Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

© The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2003

Opening page photo: *Two child delegates, Gabriela Azurduy Arrieta from Bolivia (at left) and Audrey Cheynut from Monaco (at right) open the Special Session. It was the first time that children had addressed a formal session of the United Nations on behalf of children, a proud moment for children everywhere.*

©UNICEF/HQ03-0146/Markisz

BUILDING A WORLD FIT FOR CHILDREN

The United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children 8-10 May 2002

CONTENTS

CHAPTERS

1. Introduction 1
2. The Special Session's mission 3
3. The world takes part 6
4. The Children's Forum 9
5. The generations meet 11
6. Supporting events 14
7. A World Fit for Children 17
8. Commitments and follow-up 21

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Special Session on Children in May 2002 was a landmark for children and human development – the first Special Session of the General Assembly devoted exclusively to children and the first to include them as official delegates. It brought together 69 world leaders; 190 national delegations; more than 1,700 representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs); five Nobel Peace Prize Laureates; an array of leaders from business, religion, the arts, academia and civil society;

©UNICEF/HQ02-0068/Matt

Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, Ambassador Patricia Durrant, Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee of the Special Session on Children and Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the UN, and Carol Bellamy, UNICEF's Executive Director, at the opening of the Children's Forum.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Maria Gailand, 17, from Mexico, poses a question during an under-18-forum organized by child delegates to the Special Session. Outcomes of these forums included recommendations for the creation of children's councils to monitor the fulfilment of government promises made during the Special Session, and the establishment of leadership training workshops.

and, for the first time in the history of UN meetings, more than 600 children as delegates and active participants. They came together to assess the progress made towards achieving the goals of the 1990 World Summit for Children, to set far-reaching goals for the 21st century and to devise a powerful strategy for achieving these global commitments.

For the first time ever, young people addressed the General Assembly on their own behalf, offering bold ideas and creative solutions. Their presence generated excitement, determination and commitment. World leaders learned first-hand that to change the world **for** children they must change the world **with** children.

Inspired by the passion and vision of these young people, the General Assembly reached agreement on 'A World Fit for Children', a rigorous plan for promoting healthy lives, providing quality basic education, combating HIV/AIDS and protecting children from abuse, exploitation and violence – in short, a plan for building a world truly fit for all children. The document provides time-bound commitments, reinforces the Millennium Development Goals and endorses the nearly 95 million *Say Yes for Children* pledges generated by the Global Movement for Children (GMC) around the world.

Global Movement for Children

Accompanied by a translator, Rattana Lay, a young delegate from Cambodia, cites examples of the various forms of child labour.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THE SPECIAL SESSION'S MISSION

"Never has a major UN meeting invited so many children and young people to participate as official delegates...their participation is what makes the Special Session special."
Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of UNICEF

For three days before the Special Session opened, hundreds of young people from all over the world met in New York at the Children's Forum. They designated two representatives to present a message from all those at the Children's Forum at the opening ceremony of the General Assembly's Special Session.

"We are children whose voices are not being heard; it is time we are taken into account," said 13-year-old Gabriela Azurduy Arrieta from Bolivia, on behalf of her peers. "We want a world fit for children, because a world fit for us is a world fit for everyone."

"We are not the sources of problems; we are the resources that are needed to solve them," added 17-year-old Audrey Cheynut from Monaco. "We are not expenses; we are investments.... You call us the future, but we are also the present."

Remarking on the new atmosphere in the halls of the United Nations thanks to the lively presence of the children, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan stressed that children have a right to expect world leaders to put their words and commitments into action. In his opening statement to the General Assembly, addressed to the world's children, he said, "We, the grown-ups, have failed you deplorably.... One in three of you has suffered from malnutrition before you turned five years old. One in four of you has not been immunized against any disease. Almost one in five of you is not attending school.... We, the grown-ups, must reverse this list of failures."

The delegates at the Special Session set out to devise a plan of action that would bridge the gap between the promises and the achievements of the 1990 World Summit for Children and help achieve the Millennium Development Goals by the target date of 2015. The outcome document of the Special Session, 'A World Fit for Children', citing the end-decade review by the Secretary-General of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children, *We the Children,* notes that the 1990s was "a decade of great promises and modest achievements for the world's children."

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted by the UN General Assembly in November 1989, was a landmark, articulating the range of children's rights and setting out the context in which children should live, one of "peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity." Over the decade, gains were made in the fight against preventable

Participants listen attentively as a young delegate speaks passionately during the Parliamentary Forum that brought together some 250 parliamentarians from 75 countries.

diseases and malnutrition, more children enrolled in school, breastfeeding increased, early childhood care improved and millions of children gained access to safe water.

These gains translated into a drop in child deaths, polio was brought to the brink of eradication, and 91 million newborns were protected from diminished learning ability through the use of iodized salt. Two Optional Protocols to the CRC were adopted by many countries to protect children from trafficking and abuse and from armed conflict respectively. The international treaty banning anti-personnel landmines and the establisment of an International Criminal Court to prosecute war crimes also advanced children's protection.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Yet, some of the most basic promises of the World Summit for Children have not been kept. Nearly 11 million children under five years of age still die each year – most of them from readily preventable causes. About 120 million primary-school-age children, over half of them girls, are not in school. About 150 million children in developing countries still suffer from malnutrition. Some 246 million children work, often in abusive conditions. The sexual abuse, prostitution, sale and trafficking of children continue on a massive global scale. Recruitment of child soldiers and the wartime targeting of children and other civilians have worsened.

At the root of this inadequate record for children are long-standing barriers such as poverty, debt burdens, poor use of resources, armed conflict and excessive military spending, as well as more recent challenges such as HIV/AIDS, which infects four young people every minute and has orphaned millions of children.

To overcome these barriers, 'A World Fit for Children' calls upon all of society to join in a global movement for children. It asks for the mobilization and allocation of new and additional resources – by reducing military expenditures and the arms trade, promoting corporate social responsibility and implementing the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. It also calls for the fulfilment of existing global targets, such as the allocation by industrialized countries of 0.7 per cent of their GNP for official development assistance, and the 20/20 Initiative, which calls for investing in basic social services. The report commits leaders to completing the unfinished agenda of the World Summit for Children and to addressing issues vital to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It reaffirms leaders' obligations to promote and protect the rights of every child, acknowledging the legal standards set by the CRC and its Optional Protocols.

UNICEF HQ02-0223/Markisz

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THE WORLD TAKES PART

"Children are at the heart of one and every Millennium Development Goal, beginning with the battle against poverty."

H.E. Ms. Hilde F. Johnson, Minister of International Development, Norway

From its earliest preparations, the Special Session was truly a global event: Long before the meeting opened, the world community was helping to shape its agenda.

A United Nations Preparatory Committee, with the support of UNICEF, conducted reviews and consultations at national, regional and international levels to measure progress towards the World Summit goals.

By the opening of the Special Session, these reviews had been conducted in nearly 160 countries, the largest-ever data collection effort on children's rights and well-being.

UNICEF also organized almost 40,000 interviews with young people, aged 9 to 18, to elicit their opinions on issues relating to their lives, families, schools, communities and governments, as well as their hopes and dreams. The opinion polls covered 72 countries in East Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Children emphasized the importance of family, but felt that adults did not listen to them. Most respected teachers, religious leaders and other authority figures, but distrusted political leaders. They also identified high levels of violence and insecurity inside and outside of the home. Many children lacked essential knowledge about HIV/AIDS. In every region, the right to education was among the rights most frequently cited in the surveys. Many young people expressed a strong desire for social justice.

In May 2000, as part of the build-up towards the Special Session, UNICEF and other leading child advocacy organizations launched the Global Movement for Children to support child rights and

Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga, and Carol Bellamy, UNICEF Executive Director, advocate for the Say Yes for Children *campaign.*

ensure accountability and action on behalf of children. With Nelson Mandela and Graça Machel at the helm, the GMC brought together young people and leaders of civil society, government, international organizations, academia and the arts. At its heart was the *Say Yes for Children* campaign, which includes 10 imperatives to make the world fit for children:

1. **Leave no child out**
2. **Put children first**
3. **Care for every child**
4. **Fight HIV/AIDS**
5. **Stop harming and exploiting children**
6. **Listen to children**
7. **Educate every child**
8. **Protect children from war**
9. **Protect the earth for children**
10. **Fight poverty: Invest in children**

The *Say Yes* campaign was conducted worldwide in schools, children's parliaments, villages, cities and in the media. One in four people in Turkey signed on to the pledge, one in five in the Congo, 20 million in China and over 3 million in Iraq. In Peru 800,000 people signed on in one day. The nearly 95 million pledges collected set a Guinness World Record for the largest-ever international pledge campaign.

The 10 imperatives were later incorporated into the Special Session outcome document. At the closing of the Children's Forum, the young participants presented the *Say Yes for Children* pledges to Nelson Mandela and Graça Machel, who then presented them to UN General Assembly President, Han Seung-soo, at the opening of a gala concert held on the UN grounds.

At the Special Session itself, the global community participated through leaders of the arts and civil society. The Gala Concert brought together celebrities such as Mia Farrow, Michael Douglas, Vendela Thommessen, Harry Belafonte, Nobel Peace Prize-winner and activist Rigoberta Menchú Tum, and other UNICEF ambassadors. They all played active roles in the many supporting events that week.

Roger Moore joined the leaders of a global campaign to eradicate polio by 2005 – and to celebrate the estimated 3 million children who can walk today because of the campaign that began in 1988.

He also participated in a meeting about iodine deficiency, the world's leading cause of preventable brain damage and mental retardation. A long-time supporter of initiatives to iodize salt, Moore lamented the loss of learning and development opportunities for children due to lack of this simple nutrient. At that event, 'A Smart Start for Children', Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Director-General of the World Health Organization, launched the Network for Sustained Elimination of Iodine Deficiency. The Network is a partnership between the salt industry and national and international organizations that has pledged to end iodine deficiency by 2005. During the meeting, former world chess champion Anatoly Karpov accepted the challenge of helping eliminate iodine deficiency in Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States.

Mia Farrow, who has worked dedicatedly with UNICEF in the global campaign to eradicate polio, participated in a workshop that focused on improving the quality of education. She said, "Let my voice here today be the voice of the 120 million children, especially the 70 million girls who cannot be here to speak for themselves but who, today in the year 2002, are still being denied their right to a quality education."

Bernice Akuamoah, from Ghana, addresses participants at an intergenerational dialogue on HIV/AIDS. At these five dialogues, child delegates and government leaders came together to discuss topics selected by the children.

Li Yi, from China, moderated the intergenerational dialogue that covered topics including child labour, child trafficking and the economic gap between rich and poor children in Asia.

The first working session of the Children's Forum on 5 May 2002. The child delegates reviewed and made recommendations on the draft Outcome Document of the Special Session, 'A World Fit for Children'. Their conclusions were presented by two delegates to the opening plenary of the Special Session on Children.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THE CHILDREN'S FORUM

"Children are change makers.... We are birds of freedom."
Sanjog Thakuri, 16, from Nepal

The Children's Forum, strictly a 'children only' event, was held on the three days prior to the opening of the Special Session. The 404 children participating – 242 girls and 162 boys, aged 8 to 18 – came from 154 countries. They filled the auditorium and meeting rooms with animated exchanges, debates and ideas. Some were experienced campaigners; many others had never before left their communities. They guided and cared for each other. They led and followed in turn. They also had fun.

Limited numbers of adults participated as facilitators and interpreters and at the opening and closing sessions of this model of democracy. The children elected representatives from among themselves to report back on decisions, draw up their final document and carry out an evaluation process. They voted on the top issues to be raised at the Special Session. And despite passionately held views, they listened intently to each other. It was a true exchange of ideas.

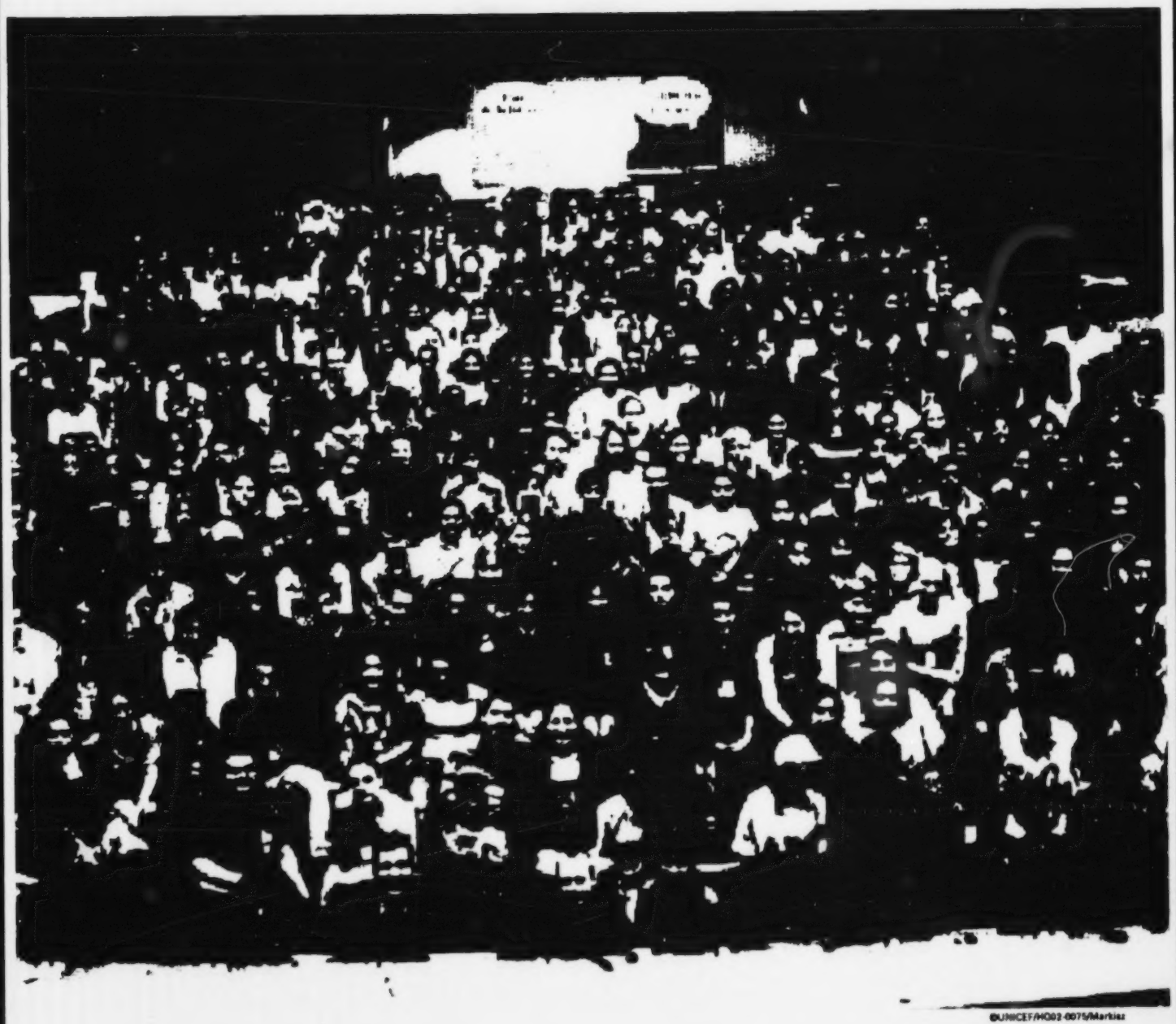
It was also highly practical. Through working group discussions, the children proposed more than 70 actions for leaders and 31 for children to work on in the areas of health, education, exploitation, armed conflict, HIV/AIDS, poverty and the environment. They discussed child labour, education and inequality. "Many parents think only about their sons and do not provide resources or education for their daughters," said 16-year-old Saadia Anwaar from Pakistan. "So we need to encourage girls that girls can do everything they want."

Many of the children felt their age often counted against them. Cristian Acosta, 16, from Uruguay, is involved in voluntary work and education with adults and children. "The main obstacle I had to face was my age," he said. "When you are young, it is very difficult to be taken seriously."

The young people were determined to follow up after the Special Session to ensure that commitments made by the world's leaders are acted on and become realities. They wanted national and international commitments to promote children's councils and parliaments.

Many of the delegates said that the Forum was a life-changing event. Abigail M. Fabrigas, a 16-year-old who had helped President Gloria Arroyo launch the *Say Yes for Children* campaign in the Philippines, had never before left her country. She arrived in New York "with bright eyes and a big smile," she wrote in her diary. Her days were packed with meetings, discussions and media interviews. After just one day, Abigail wrote: "Whew! What a day! Today I was again able to see the essence of 'child power'. Everyone, regardless of country, language, age, gender and religious and political background, was given an equal chance to speak up."

Some 400 children met for a three-day Children's Forum from 5 to 7 May 2002, prior to the UN Special Session on Children.



©UNICEF/HQ02-0075/Markisz

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THE GENERATIONS MEET

"May I suggest that, for the next three days, we set aside any adult prejudices, and listen to, and learn from, the children and young people that are with us.... Let us be as open as they are to new ideas, differing opinions and alternative viewpoints."

H.E. Mr. Han Seung-soo, President of the United Nations General Assembly, at the opening of the Special Session on Children

Despite the key role that children had in the preparatory process for the Special Session and of course in their own Children's Forum, there was still some concern that a generation gap would emerge at the Special Session itself. Could children make the transition from their own Forum to the sphere of adults at the General Assembly? Would world leaders accept these young voices as substantive contributions to their 'real' discussions? Indeed, would young people be interested in the views of adults?

As it turned out, young people were absolutely critical to the Special Session's success. They made vital contributions to the plenary discussions. They were often prominent in the supporting events. They engaged with world leaders, heads of industry, leaders of civil society and other youths, exchanging ideas, speaking about their concerns, describing their vision and making recommendations for the future. Adults often took special measures to make sure that children's voices were heard. Both adult leaders and young people appreciated their honest exchanges.

"Your presence here marks a new chapter in the history of the United Nations," said Secretary-General Kofi Annan. "We all want a better world for children. But so far, it is adults that have called the shots. Now, we are going to build a better world with children.... Your voices will be heard – I promise you that."

A supporting event attended by over 250 parliamentarians from 75 countries, hosted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and UNICEF to discuss the impact of legislation and budget allocations on children, included members of children's parliaments. Bintou Sonko, a 12-year-old from the Gambia representing the Children's Forum, told parliamentarians that children "want a say in governance."

Three 16-year-olds, Mandisa Nakana from South Africa, Alexandru Bogdan Rosu from Romania and Laura Hannant from Canada, joined Nane Annan, wife of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy and other adults at the forum on Women's Leadership for Children.

Two child delegates also attended each of three round-table discussions on 'Renewal of Commitment and Future Action for Children in the Next Decade'. At the first round table, Te Kerei Moka, 17, of New Zealand and Caroline Barebwoha, 16, of Uganda stressed the importance of education, especially for

Wilmot, a young Liberian boy, describes the impact of war on children at a UN Security Council Meeting on Children and Armed Conflict. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Security Council committed to redoubling its efforts to protect children affected by armed conflict; condemned the targeting or exploitation of children in armed conflict; encouraged all parties to conflict to collaborate in disarming and demobilizing child soldiers; and supported the commitments of Member States concerning war-affected children.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

girls and children from indigenous groups. Te Kerei spoke of the need to preserve traditional culture while Caroline emphasized the need to invest in the next generation.

At the second round table, 17-year-old Marie Claire Umuhoza of Rwanda described the effects of violence on her family and country. Her parents had been killed and her sisters had been forced to flee. "I am the voice of all the children who have suffered throughout the world...you who are members of mankind – why have you let these things happen?"

At the third round table, Sara Mandić, 16, from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia spoke about the importance of education and schools that are fit for children, saying that poor quality schools "can make us study but they cannot make us learn." Yang Ngen Fat, 17, of Suriname talked about corporal punishment in school and violence in general, asking participants to "imagine the many children who are abused...who are sold, who don't have families to care for them."

Five ground-breaking 'intergenerational dialogues' took place between children and the leaders of delegations and UN agencies, including seven Heads of State. Four sessions focused on subjects of regional relevance and one focused on the theme of armed conflict. Children moderated these sessions, competently shaping the discussions.

The young people greeted Nelson Mandela, a global elder statesman and distinguished participant at the Special Session, with a thunderous ovation on his arrival at the closing ceremony of the Children's Forum. It was proof positive that age differences pose no barrier to communication.

©UNICEF/HQ92-0124/Markisz

From left Graça Machel, former Education Minister for Mozambique and author of the landmark United Nations report The Impact of War on Children, *Nelson Mandela, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and former President of South Africa, and Nane Annan, artist and wife of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, celebrate the global pledge campaign,* Say Yes for Children. *Some 95 million people worldwide have supported the campaign that endorses 10 core actions for children.*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SUPPORTING EVENTS

"We have to be consulted because we live our problems and we are the ones who know the solutions."

Santiago García Couto, 15, from Uruguay

The more than 120 events in support of the Special Session coursed with passionate discussions and the exchange of experiences on how best to promote the rights of children.

There were meetings, panel discussions and symposia on child trafficking, early marriage, education, breastfeeding and early childhood – as well as on sexually transmitted infections, juvenile justice and armed conflict. Every issue crucial to the rights and well-being of children and young people was on the table for discussion.

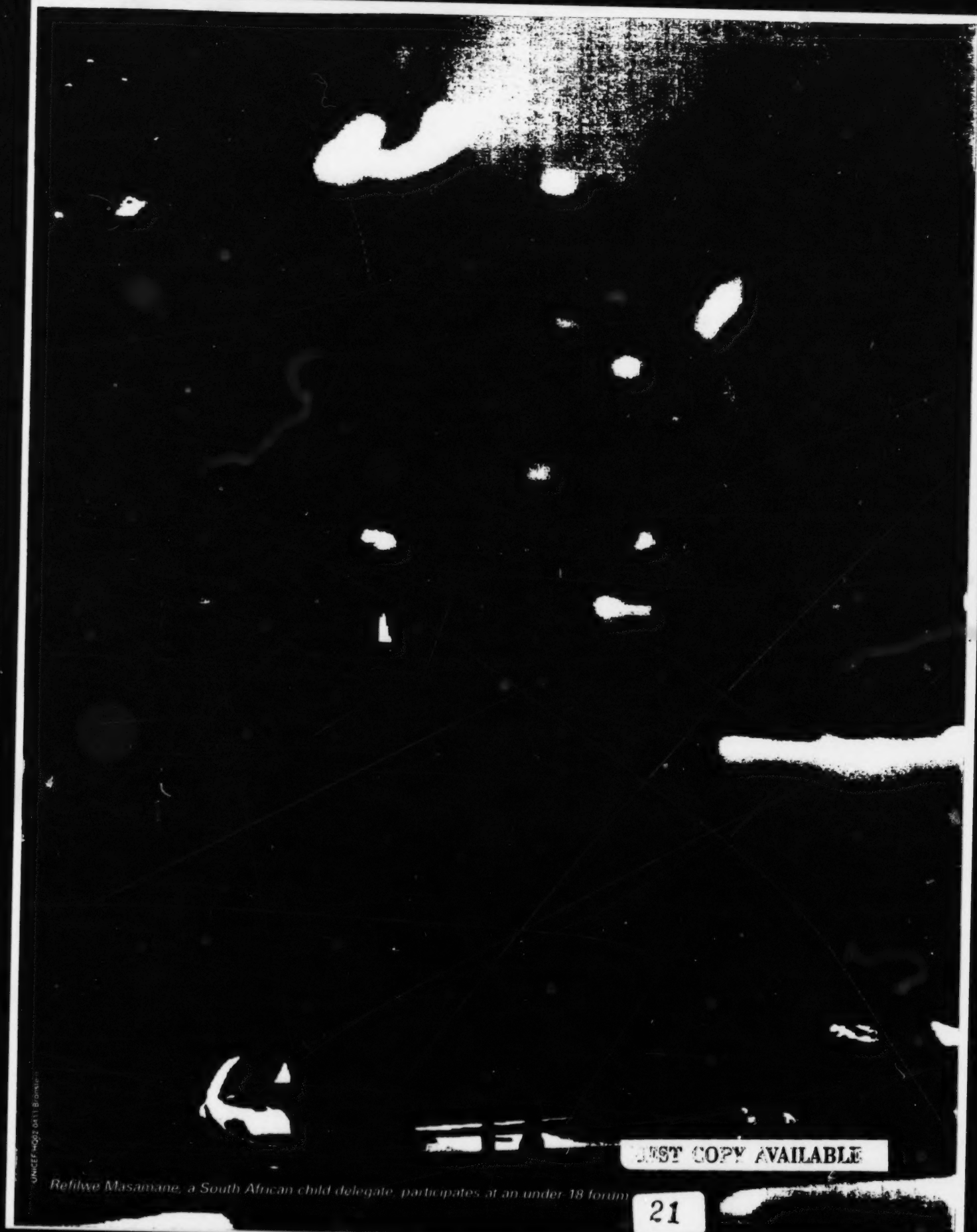
UNICEF and UNAIDS hosted a discussion on effective strategies for HIV prevention for young people that included adolescents and experts as panellists. A Parliamentary Forum attended by parliamentarians from 75 countries – with children's parliaments well represented – analysed ways to make national policies and legislation more responsive to children. At a symposium, religious leaders, noting that five sixths of the world's population are members of religious communities, pledged to help make the world fit for children.

The first-ever global meeting of Independent Human Rights Institutions for Children – such as commissioners and ombudspersons for children – led to a commitment to help double the number of countries with such institutions, from the current 30, within the next decade. The United Nations Environment Programme, UNICEF and WHO launched *Children in the New Millennium: Environmental Impact on Health*, a publication that drew attention to the fact that 5,500 children die every day from diseases caused by consuming unsafe water or food.

A panel on Child-Friendly Cities brought together mayors, NGO and UN representatives and children to focus on good practices for urban areas. Jin Ling Yang, an 18-year-old from China, illustrated through a drawing the difference between a polluted city of today and a dream city where children could play and go to school unharmed.

First Spouses and 32 other guests participated with Nane Annan in a forum on Women's Leadership for Children. Janet Museveni of Uganda, one of the women leaders, spoke movingly about the need to work with communities to reduce the incidence of HIV/AIDS. The Forum affirmed the need to guarantee every girl access to quality education that would give her the confidence to assume a leadership role.

The Public-Private Partnership Dialogue brought together Heads of State, UN officials and corporate leaders. Bill Gates, Chairman of Microsoft Corporation and co-founder of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, emphasized that partnerships between corporations and non-profit organizations are vital to addressing global problems, such as



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Refilwe Masamane, a South African child delegate, participates at an under 18 forum

HIV/AIDS. "We have to draw on each other's strength and expertise," he said.

Gates cited the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), an alliance of public and private sector organizations created to eliminate vitamin and mineral deficiencies, launched during the Special Session. GAIN will finance food fortification in developing countries to improve health, cognitive development and productivity. GAIN is modelled on the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), a public-private partnership that has increased childhood immunization rates and provided new vaccines and funds for immunization in 54 countries since 1999. The Gates Foundation is a key donor to both GAIN and GAVI.

Carol Bellamy noted that public-private collaboration has been critical to the near eradication of polio and major reductions in iodine deficiency disorders.

NGOs held more than 80 supporting events spanning the entire gamut of children's rights and concerns. The International Pediatric Association's meeting, 'Healthy Children for a Healthy World', led to a 'call to action' to mobilize over half a million paediatricians worldwide. In another event held at Quaker House, close to UN headquarters in New York, children learned how to campaign against landmines in their schools and communities.

NGOs developed a caucus on health and the environment and organized a panel on innovative ways to educate marginalized children.

NGO members marched, danced and presented dramas to make their points. They organized performance workshops, events about children living on the street, girls as their own advocates and education in emergencies.

Many voices at NGO events were of children who have lived in extreme conditions. From northern Uganda, Akelo, displaced by terror attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army, is a leader of a youth NGO that conducts peer education. Bala Subramanyam, an 18-year-old from India, helped build a children's union when he was a 7-year-old working child.

Many supporting events focused on breaking the cycle of poverty. At a Special Session breakfast, Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer in the United Kingdom, called for a 'new deal' between industrialized and developing countries, based on truly open markets and increased development aid.

Chancellor Brown said, "We must achieve our goal – the goal of "decent-minded" people everywhere in the world – that no country, no person and no child is left behind."

Young people participating intently in a discussion during the intergenerational dialogue with children from Latin America and the Caribbean.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A WORLD FIT FOR CHILDREN

"Coming away from this experience, it is our hope that more progress will be made in the next 10 years than was made in the last."

Statement made by three youth representatives from the Children's Forum

When the Special Session on Children ended on 10 May, world leaders left this historic event having pledged their support to 'A World Fit for Children'. This document combines a declaration, a review of progress and a plan of action, and establishes 21 specific goals and targets covering four overarching priorities:

- Promoting healthy lives;
- Providing quality education;
- Protecting against abuse, exploitation and violence;
- Combating HIV/AIDS.

©UNICEF/HQ02-0480/Markiz

Bushra Jawabri from the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and Julia Resnitsky from Israel share a common background in activism to find a peaceful solution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Here they take part in an intergenerational discussion on the effects of war on children.

Virtually no document coming out of a major international meeting enjoys smooth sailing, and this one was no exception. Yet despite some criticisms – particularly on allocation of resources, reproductive health rights and links to the CRC – there was a consensus that the outcome document was strong in its advocacy for partnerships, on the participation of women and children, and on child survival, development and protection.

In the end, the UN General Assembly officially adopted 'A World Fit for Children'.

Declaration

The Declaration commits world leaders to completing the unfinished agenda of the World Summit for Children and to achieving additional goals and objectives, particularly the goals set at the Millennium Summit. It further acknowledges the world's obligation to promote and protect children's rights and to recognize the CRC as legally binding. The Declaration endorses the 10 key objectives of *Say Yes for Children* that had emerged from the Global Movement for Children.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

International Labour Organization (ILO) Director-General Juan Somavia speaks about work that endangers children.

A delegate from the Latin America and Caribbean region participates in an intergenerational dialogue.

A march for children's rights, followed by a rally and candlelight vigil, was held on the first day of the UN Special Session on Children. Sponsored by child rights groups, the march highlighted the global fight against exploitative child labour and the call for world leaders to keep the promises made at the 1990 World Summit for Children.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Plan of Action

Creating a world fit for children
The Plan of Action is a commitment to create a world in which all children get the best possible start in life, have access to a quality basic education and develop their individual capabilities.

The Plan calls for supporting and strengthening the family, eliminating discrimination and tackling poverty.

Nations committed themselves to achieving gender equality by eliminating discrimination against girls and addressing the role of boys. They vowed to protect human rights for all, including indigenous children and children with disabilities.

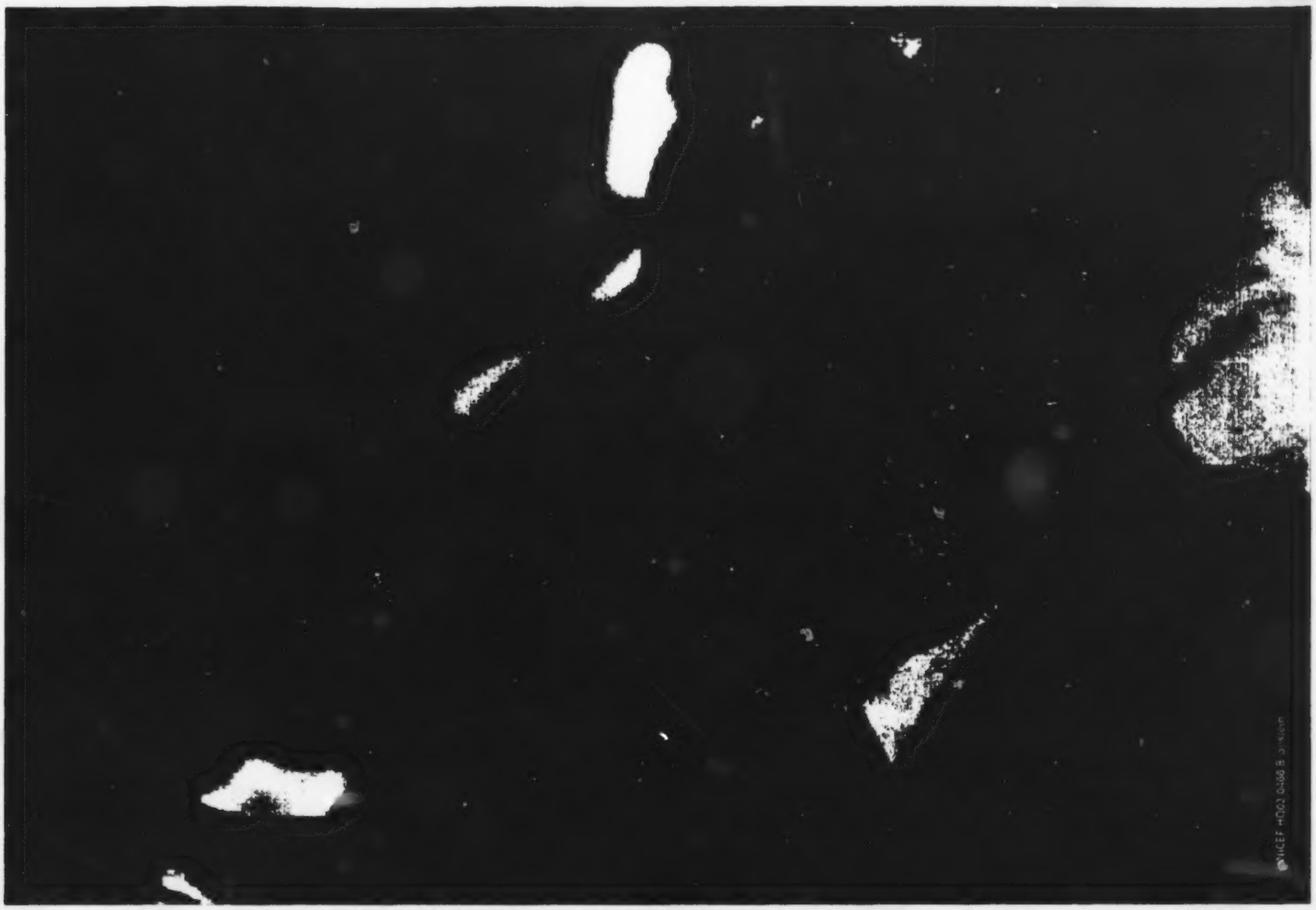
Goals, strategies and actions
Governments set priority actions and targets for 2010, as benchmarks towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

1. Promoting healthy lives
   The Plan contains 25 measures "to break the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition and poor health by providing a safe and healthy start in life." These include targets to reduce infant, under-five and maternal mortality rates, to improve access to clean water and hygienic sanitation, and especially to support early childhood and adolescent development.

2. Providing quality education
   Governments will give high priority to ensuring that, by 2015, all children have access to and complete primary education that is free, compulsory and of good quality. By 2010, at least 90 per cent of primary-school-age children should have enrolled in school. Gender equality in education must be achieved by 2015. There are 19 specific measures directed at achieving greater access to and better quality of education.

3. Protecting children against abuse, exploitation and violence
   World leaders agreed that children have the right to be protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence. The Plan commits governments to protecting children from the effects of armed conflict, from all forms of sexual exploitation – including trafficking – and from the worst forms of child labour.

4. Combating HIV/AIDS
   Governments agreed to urgent and aggressive action to reduce HIV infection among young people by 25 per cent in the most affected countries by 2005, and globally by 2010. They vowed to



H.E. Mr. Alberto Chissano, President of Mozambique, speaking on the importance of youth activism at an intergenerational dialogue with children from Africa.

reduce the number of infants infected with HIV by 20 per cent by 2005 and 50 per cent by 2010.

Mobilizing resources

The Plan of Action recognized that an investment in children "lays the foundation for a just society, a strong economy and a world free of poverty." It further underscored that promoting healthy lives for all of the world's children is "achievable" and "clearly affordable for the global community."

Special mention is made of the need to support the least-developed countries, those in sub-Saharan Africa, Small Island Developing States, landlocked nations and countries with economies in transition.

Richer nations must meet their commitments to allocate 0.7 per cent of GNP for development, to cut the debt burden on developing countries and to open up markets and increase trade. New resources will be sought from public and private sources, partly through a reduction in military spending and partly through enhanced partnerships with business and civil society. Additionally, to fulfil the goals of the 20/20 Initiative, 20 per cent of official development assistance from industrialized countries and 20 per cent of the national budgets of developing countries will be committed to basic social services.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

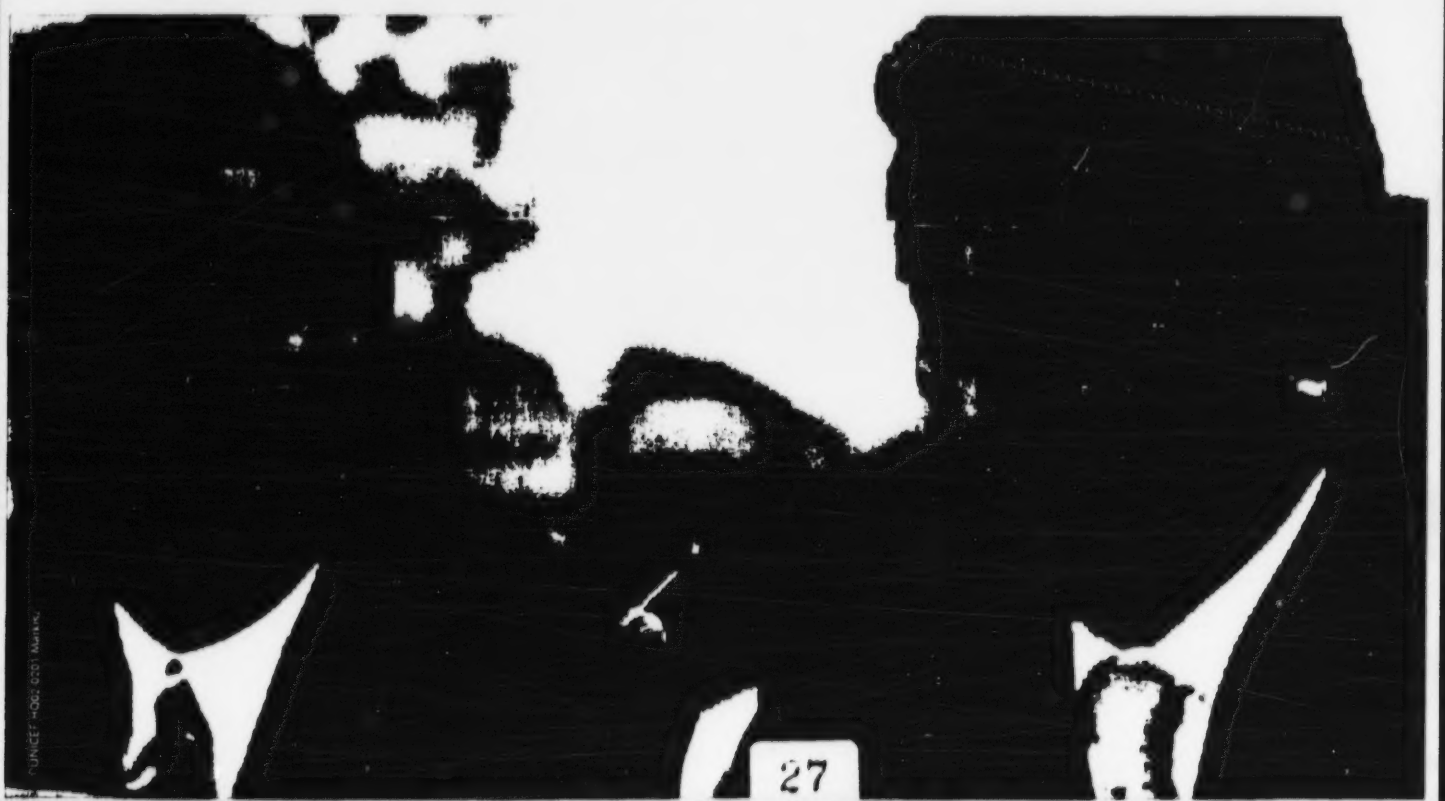
COMMITMENTS AND FOLLOW-UP

"Give us – your children – a good today. We will, in turn, give you a good tomorrow."
Toukir Ahmed, 16, from Bangladesh

'A World Fit for Children' is the embodiment of the language of commitments. In the Plan of Action, world leaders "strongly reaffirm our commitment to achieve these goals and targets". It sets targets for 2010 to measure progress towards reaching the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

'A World Fit for Children' states that the primary responsibility for implementing the Plan rests with each individual country, but that industrialized countries must meet their official development aid commitments and speedily implement debt relief. New and substantial resources are needed for social development at national and international levels.

In addition to the pledges agreed to by all world leaders, 25 countries and the European Union made additional pledges during the Special Session. For example, China agreed to introduce the hepatitis B vaccine into its routine immunization programme for



children during 2002; Lesotho undertook to provide basic education to all children by 2006; Uruguay pledged to reduce infant mortality, poverty and social marginalization even further; and Peru promised to reduce military spending to redirect money to children's services. The European Union promised that its members would average 0.39 per cent of GDP for official development assistance by 2006. Luxembourg and Norway adopted the even more far-reaching goal of giving 1 per cent of GDP by 2005.

Many international associations, NGOs, faith-based organizations and local governments made specific pledges.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the largest global group of lawmakers, launched a number of important initiatives and commitments. These included enshrining the Convention on the Rights of the Child in national constitutions, establishing ombudspersons for children accountable to their parliaments, setting up formal parliamentary committees to monitor the impact of budgetary measures on children, ensuring an annual parliamentary debate on the situation of children and establishing youth parliaments.

Leaders of many faiths committed their communities to work together to build peace – a necessity for children to flourish – and to the review of teachings, programmes and policies relating to children, ensuring that they promote the best interests of children. They pledged to advocate at every level on behalf of children, both in terms of policies and resources. They promised to work tirelessly to reduce the discrimination and stigma faced by children because of disease, disability, gender or minority status.

The mayors of Yokohama and Manila vowed to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children in their cities. Rotary International pledged to help eradicate polio worldwide.

World leaders agreed to implement policies, forge partnerships and encourage young people's participation in order to fulfil the commitments of 'A World Fit for Children'.

They also agreed – by the end of 2003 – to develop national and regional action plans with specific time-bound and measurable goals and targets. UNICEF has been charged with monitoring progress on the Plan of Action, and the UN Secretary-General will report regularly to the General Assembly on the progress made towards implementing the Plan.

After the World Summit for Children in 1990, 155 countries drew up national plans of action (NPAs). For the most part these were developed within government circles with virtually no involvement of children themselves. This time governments committed themselves to "a global movement for children that creates an unstoppable momentum for change". They pledged to strengthen partnerships with families, local government, parliamentarians, NGOs and community-based organizations, the private sector, religious and cultural leaders, mass media, regional organizations and professionals – and especially with children. "The right of children, including adolescents, to express themselves freely must be respected and promoted and their views taken into account in all matters affecting them...in accordance with the age and maturity of the child," states the Plan of Action from 'A World Fit for Children'.

H.E. Mr. Alejandro Toledo Manrique, President of Peru, strongly reaffirms his commitment to the goals of 'A World Fit for Children'.

28

There was consensus that NGOs have a major role to play in drawing up national plans of action for children, putting pressure on governments to allocate resources for children and monitoring progress towards honouring pledges made in 'A World Fit for Children' and to fulfilling obligations under the CRC. One measure of NGOs' success will be the degree to which they have encouraged children's involvement in the planning and implementation of NPAs.

"When the Special Session is over, the UN will look to NGOs to act as watchdogs and monitor promises made," UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan told NGO representatives. "You must keep us on our toes."

That process began immediately. The NGO Steering Group organized an up-to-the-minute Commitment Chart of pledges made by governments, NGOs and others at the Session, now published at www.ngosatunicef.org.

And the Global Movement for Children is already focusing on how the commitments in 'A World Fit for Children' are being honoured. As Eveline Herfkens, then Minister for Development Cooperation in the Netherlands, said to the Special Session, "One thing we teach our children is that a deal is a deal".

Detailed information on the Special Session, including the official text of 'A World Fit for Children', is available at www.unicef.org/specialsession.

As part of the activities surrounding the Special Session, the National Youth Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela and children from the Young Dancers in Repertory troupe from the United States performed at the gala concert 'Celebration of Leadership: Change the World with Children' on 9 May 2002

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Published by the
United Nations Children's Fund
Division of Communication
3 United Nations Plaza, H-9F
New York, NY 10017, USA

pubdoc@unicef.org
www.unicef.org

April 2003

Global Movement for Children

Cover photo: Gabriela Azurduy Arrieta from Bolivia, one of two children representing the Children's Forum, delivers a message at the opening of the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children.

©UNICEF/HQ02-0448/Ma'ayeh

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

[X] This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

[ ] This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").

P2031242